

The Notebook Study Guide

The Notebook by Nicholas Sparks (author)

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Contents

The Notebook Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Miracles, Ghosts.....	5
Reunion, Phone Calls.....	7
Kayaks and Forgotten Dreams, Moving Water, Swans and Storms.....	10
Courtrooms; An Unexpected Visitor; Crossroads; A Letter from Yesterday.....	13
Winter for Two.....	15
Characters.....	20
Objects/Places.....	23
Themes.....	25
Style.....	27
Quotes.....	29
Topics for Discussion.....	31



Plot Summary

Noah begins by saying that he is eighty years old, that he does not regret any of the paths he has chosen to travel, and that the paths today are more rocky than those of years ago. He describes his day in the nursing home. He says that he picks up a notebook that he has read many times and passes many doors. The people inside - like he - have gotten accustomed to being alone with only a television for company, and that a person can get used to anything. He reaches a particular room and goes inside where he is greeted by nurses caring for a woman who is obviously upset. Noah says mornings are always difficult and she will calm down later when the nurses have gone. Noah knows the odds and science are both against him, and that he simply hopes for a miracle. Believing in prayer as he does, he takes time to pray as he opens the book, puts on glasses and picks up a magnifying glass, and prepares to read.

The notebook is the story of Noah and Allie, two who were lovers as teenagers in a summer romance, but who were then separated by Allie's parents who felt Noah wasn't the best man for her. Noah writes letters to Allie over the years, but Allie's mother withholds them and Allie assumes Noah has forgotten her. Noah works, joins the military and inherits money from a previous employer that allows him to buy a historic house and repair it. It's then that Allie comes to visit him, three weeks from her wedding date but seemingly unable to marry without seeing Noah one more time. The love between them immediately springs to life and Noah begs Allie to remain. She leaves but realizes she can't love anyone like she loves Noah and returns to him.

This is the story Noah reads to Allie and occasionally she responds to him, though the medical professionals say her response is impossible. On a particular day, Noah reads the story and Allie asks which man the woman in the story chooses. She confesses that she doesn't know Noah and doesn't know her own name. They talk for hours with Allie later saying she knows which of the two the woman in the story picked, though she doesn't seem yet to equate that story with herself. Noah admits that it breaks his heart that she doesn't know him, but that these days are much better than the days in which he tried to make her remember. He says that on those days, they'd both be exhausted with him answering questions and her anguish at having lost everything, including memories of her children.

Through their lives, the two have written letters to each other and these provide memories for Noah. He likens living this near Allie without ever again being able to fully possess her love to the relationship between day and night, combined at dusk but never quite touching.

Then Noah suffers a stroke and for awhile it seems he might not survive. When he does return to the nursing facility where he and Allie have lived since the onset of her Alzheimer's, he wants to see her. It's their forty-ninth anniversary but it's also against the rules for him to visit her at night. After bedtime, she's typically easily frightened, never knows him and is anxious if awakened. On this particular night, he is confronted by a nurse who is touched by his love for Allie and who turns her head as he shuffles past.

When he reaches her room, he vows not to wake her but does anyway. When she sees him, there's a light of recognition in her eyes as she begins to unbutton his shirt



Miracles, Ghosts

Miracles, Ghosts Summary

Noah begins by saying that he is eighty years old, that he does not regret any of the paths he has chosen to travel, and that the paths today are more rocky than those of years ago. He describes his day in the nursing home. He picks up a notebook that he has read many times and passes many doors. The people inside - like he - have gotten accustomed to being alone with only a television for company, and a person can get used to anything. He reaches a particular room and goes inside where he is greeted by nurses caring for a woman who is obviously upset. Noah says that mornings are always difficult and that she will calm down later when the nurses have gone. Noah says that he knows the odds and science are both against him, and that he simply hopes for a miracle. Believing in prayer as he does, he takes time to pray as he opens the book, puts on glasses, picks up a magnifying glass, and prepares to read.

In October of 1946, Noah Calhoun is relaxing on the porch of the house he's restoring. It was built in 1772, is on twelve acres near Brices Creek and is something he has loved working on. He has a dog named Clem and on this particular evening is sitting on the porch with the knowledge that he's soon going to be out of money and will have to find a job. He is thirty-one years old and remembers his father saying that the sound of nature would keep him sane during his tour in the military.

Noah claims an elderly black man as his best friend. The man's name is Gus and the two spend a couple of nights together each week. Gus plays harmonica and Noah plays guitar, and they sometimes spend their evenings playing a few songs. Noah has never married, though he was close in 1932. The girl's name is Allie and they are introduced by friends. Noah immediately recognizes her as the woman with whom he can spend the rest of his life. They spend the summer together, learning about each other and falling in love. Years later, Noah tells Gus about that summer and admits to himself that he sees Allie in many places around town. Gus tells him that the feeling he has for Allie will never go away.

One afternoon, Noah stops working and spends some time fishing. Noah recalls problems he had in school and his father's taking matters in hand, demanding that Noah spend hours after school with him daily until Noah's speaking - and therefore learning - improved. Years later, he meets Allie. Her parents refuse to sanction their love for each other. She vows to remain with Noah but when her parents return to their home in Winston-Salem at the end of the summer, she goes with them. Later, Noah leaves New Bern and goes to find her. He gets a job at a scrap yard working for a Jewish man named Morris Goldman who praises Noah for his work and says his only negative point is that he isn't Jewish. Over time, Noah's work and the fact that war is imminent builds the business to a major enterprise employing thirty people.



Then Noah announces that he's joining the military and Goldman pledges to share the profits if he ever sells the business. Noah does his time in the military and when Goldman dies, finds that he was named in the will. With the almost seventy thousand dollars from his share of the sale, Noah buys the historic home he's working on and begins fixing it up. Noah shows the house to his father, who is wheezing but assures Noah it's just the flu. His father dies a month later. Noah's life is calm. He has spent some time helping a widowed neighbor prepare her shack for the winter months and sometimes drops by Gus' house to offer any member of the family a ride to town because the family has no car.

A newspaper reports on his purchase of the historic home and Allie sees it in the newspaper, prompting her trip back to New Bern before her wedding. She checks into a motel then goes to visit Noah.

Miracles, Ghosts Analysis

The situation hasn't yet been fully explained. The man, Noah, is reading from a notebook that contains the story of his life and that of his one true love, Allie. Allie is the woman who is visibly upset the first time Noah mentions her in the book. Allie has Alzheimer's and doesn't know Noah, though she has always loved him as fully as he loves her. They are both in the nursing home but don't room together because Allie often doesn't know him, and his presence sometimes upsets her. By reading the notebook, he sometimes breaks through the barriers of the disease, though most say there's no scientific explanation for Allie's occasional bouts of lucidity after hearing Noah read to her. Noah himself simply calls it a miracle.

Allie thinks about her decision to visit Noah before she is to be married, analyzing it and seeming to justify it. Her motivations are not completely outlined. It seems evident that she is actually hoping to eliminate her feelings for Noah so that she feels confident about her upcoming marriage. She says to herself that there's no reason to be here, but amends that, saying that at least she'll "have her answer."

Noah talks only briefly about his own time in the military, but that could be as telling as if he'd offered many details. In fact, he says only that he spent the time and that he returned, telling nothing of the war and his role or any danger he was in during that period of his life.

Allie spends time working as a volunteer in a hospital during the war. She's needed but the work is more difficult than she seems to have expected. She meets Lon during this time. He is self-confident and successful, things that she now considers wildly important, though it's probably because she wants someone totally different from the young men she deals with during her time at the hospital.



Reunion, Phone Calls

Reunion, Phone Calls Summary

Allie cries when they reunite, apologizing for it immediately. Allie tells him she saw the story of his historic home in the paper, which is how she found him. She says she has something to tell him before they begin to talk but pauses. He knows it must be serious and asks if she wants to go for a walk. She asks if there's anyone he needs to inform about his plans, and Noah says that he lives alone with Clem his hound dog.

Noah and Allie walk and she tells him of her engagement. He asks if she loves him and admits that it hurts to hear her say yes. He wonders about her admission that she didn't tell Lon about her visit to Noah, saying that Lon wouldn't understand. Noah tells her not to marry if she isn't certain. He then asks if she wants to get acquainted again. She cites the fact that Noah knows that she is engaged and that makes it alright to spend some time with him. He invites her for dinner and she agrees. Noah empties crab traps and Allie slices vegetables to fry for their meal.

They sit on the porch while the crabs soak and Noah tells Allie about Goldman and how Noah has hired workers to fix up the place. Noah says he wrote and Allie says she never got the letters, realizing that her mother must have thrown them away to keep Allie from pining for Noah. While Allie says her mother was wrong, she says that her mother was doing what she thought best. Allie further explains her mother's action by saying that her mother never loved anyone like Allie loved Noah. Noah asks if they might have made it, had she gotten the letters and Allie says she likes to think they would. Allie says that there will be something missing from her relationship with Lon. Noah says he's thought of her "all the time," is not involved with anyone, and then goes to start dinner.

When he returns, the conversation turns to her artistic talent. She says that she no longer paints, having been told by her professors that she was talented but discouraged by her mother who thought art an unsuitable career. Noah shows her the painting she'd done for him, hanging over his fireplace, and tells her she is an artist. She is amazed that he is able to say exactly what she needs to hear, even after all this time, and wonders if she is falling in love with him again. She touches his hand but the moment is interrupted by the timer in the kitchen. Noah gives her an old shirt to wear over her dress because the crabs will be messy and she says it reminds her of their first date when Noah gave her his jacket. They were accompanied on that date by Noah's friend Fin. Allie asks about Fin, and Noah says he died in the war, adding that he didn't think Fin would have joined except that Noah did. Noah says he thinks of Fin often these days.

They sit on a porch for awhile after dinner, and she eventually announces she has to go. When Noah walks her to the car, he asks if he'll see her the following day. She admits that all she has to do is say "no," and that will end it. Instead, she says that she will and



he asks her to come by at noon. After she leaves, Noah sits on the porch for a long time and takes on the appearance of a man consumed by longing.

Lon has called Allie's hotel several times over the course of the evening. He racks his brain for some detail he's missing about the situation and finally remembers that Allie's mother had once said that Allie had had a case of puppy love with a young man from New Bern, and that Allie had been angry over the comment. Lon admits that he has absolutely been working too much and not spending enough time with Allie and promises to have his secretary check his schedule to be certain he isn't working too hard after his marriage.

Reunion, Phone Calls Analysis

Noah says that he has referred to Allie as a "living poem" when trying to describe her. He also talks of the traits she has that he sought and never found in other women - such as intelligence, passion, and confidence. Noah also aspires to those traits in himself. Allie says that Noah is the only poet she's ever known. He denies any talent for writing, saying he only likes to read poetry. Noah says that his father taught him to read poetry to get over a horrible stuttering problem that prompted the teacher to label him "retarded."

Allie admits that after she told Noah of her engagement, she felt an ease in the compulsion that drove her there. She seems to believe at this point that it's because Noah's acceptance of her engagement is all that was necessary to ease her own apparent worry over the engagement. Noah wonders why she came and Allie later has to remind herself that she's engaged.

Allie says she remembers the two of them sneaking to the old house when they were teenagers and that she was late getting home. She says it was that night that her mother told her that sometimes a person can't do what they want, but must be responsible. Noah says he'd had no idea until then that Allie's parents didn't like him. Allie says the thought he wasn't good enough for her and Noah says it's the same thing. The fact of their status difference is apparently the reason Allie's parents were set against the budding romance and why the two were separated at the end of the summer. Noah will also discover that Allie never got his letters, another apparent effort by her mother to keep the two apart.

As Allie and Noah talk during dinner, Allie realizes that this closeness is what's missing in her relationship with Lon. She tries to tell Lon she needs this, but Lon simply isn't comfortable sharing his feelings. As they go outside, Noah seems ready to admit to himself that he has fallen in love with her again but doesn't seem to admit that he has never stopped loving her from all those years ago.

Lon admits to being afraid about Allie's "puppy love" situation in New Bern years before, and hopes that Allie has told him the entire truth about her trip. Lon says that Allie is his best friend, that she was brutally honest when he told her he wasn't ready for a steady



relationship years earlier. She'd replied that he was looking for something to fill his life and wasn't smart enough to realize what he was looking for, and that he's now determined to keep her. It's interesting that Lon says Allie provides everything he needs but Allie doesn't think the same of Lon.



Kayaks and Forgotten Dreams, Moving Water, Swans and Storms

Kayaks and Forgotten Dreams, Moving Water, Swans and Storms Summary

Allie wakes early after a near sleepless night, having wakened after many dreams. She is glad she came, slept in Noah's shirt and realizes that she is elated about his encouragement for her painting. She knows he likes to spend his mornings in his own way, and Noah is in fact on the water. He loves to watch the dawn of a new day from the water, and Allie recalls that they watched one sunrise together, though she had to sneak out of the house to do so. Noah splits some wood and does some other chores, and notes that it's likely to rain, meaning the trip he'd planned up the river is likely a problem.

Allie spends the morning roaming through town and goes inside a shop featuring work of local artists. She notes one particular artist that Noah likes and then realizes that it's because those works remind her of her own. She stops at a local store, buys paper, chalk and pencils, and spends the rest of the morning drawing, first a street scene and then a portrait. As she leaves for her meeting with Noah, the hotel manager tells her that Mr. Hammond called the previous evening, four times, and that he didn't leave a message but seemed worried about Allie. Allie doesn't think she can reach him at that time of day because he'll be in court. She admits to being relieved that she can't be expected to call him back right away. She tells the manager that she'll call him back later, leaves the message that she's out shopping in case Lon calls back, and heads to Noah's.

When she arrives at Noah's, he says that he is worried about the impending rain. Allie says she wants to go anyway, and they get into a canoe to head upriver. Noah takes along a sack of bread. Allie sits with her back to the front of the canoe, preferring to watch Noah than the scenery in front of her. Allie becomes lost in thought, considering him and what she knows of him. When he asks what she's thinking, his voice draws her back to the present, and she asks if he can remember anything in particular from that summer. He says he remembers every moment of that time and that there's no single thing he remembers more than any other.

They continue along the creek for some time and Allie thinks about life in general. She admits that the world doesn't understand Noah and his poetic tendencies, and never will. She also vows that she will now begin work on her art and wonders for a moment whether Lon will encourage her, but recalls his reaction to an abstract she'd done that he didn't understand. Soon, Noah says that they have arrived, and they duck under a tree covered with foliage hiding the entrance to a small lake that is teeming with Canadian geese and Tundra swan. There are so many birds that Noah literally pushes them aside with the canoe as they glide across the water. He gives Allie the bread and she begins feeding the fowl, paying special attention to the small ones. Noah says he



doesn't know why they are here or how long they'll stay, but theorizes they got off course. They stay as long as Noah dares. When he decides the storm is likely to catch them before they can reach home, he pushes the canoe in that direction, his muscles rippling with practiced ease as he paddles. When the rain starts, it takes only minutes for them to become drenched. Allie turns her face to the sky and laughs and Noah is delighted. He notes that she'd said she didn't mind getting wet, but that he hadn't been certain. When they reach the dock, he pulls the canoe up far enough so it won't float away and ties it just to be sure, then turns to find that Allie hasn't raced ahead to the house but is waiting for him. They hold hands and walk inside.

Once in the front door, Noah leaves her and goes upstairs where he finds some dry clothes for her and tells her she can take a shower if she wants. She goes to his bedroom to change and is hit by the sensuality of being naked in the room where he sleeps. She hangs her wet clothes in the bathroom to dry, brushes her hair and foregoes the shower, citing the fact that she likes the softness of the rainwater. She goes downstairs to find that Noah has changed and is building a fire. She watches him quietly from the doorway for a couple of minutes before he discovers her there. They agree on brandy to drink and he brings it from the pantry. When he returns, she's pulled a blanket from the couch and is seated on the floor near the fire.

Allie says she's always liked storms, even as a young girl and believes them to be romantic. Noah now asks her what she remembers from their summer together and she says the memory of making love is the strongest. She recalls Noah's cooler attitude when he discovered that she had a boyfriend, and she says it was no problem to tell that young man that she'd fallen in love. Allie recalls that she'd written letters to Noah after returning home, but had never sent them - at least partly because she worried that what they'd had wasn't real. She says she never contacted him later for fear that she'd discover that he had another love in his life. He says that he would have loved to hear from her, and she replies that he's "sweet." Noah almost lets the comment pass, but doesn't, saying that he's not sweet, but is in love and has been since that summer. It's then that Allie tells him that she's never been with another man. She recalls a letter he'd written to her prior to her leaving that summer in which he'd explained their upcoming departure. He'd written that they were destined to find each other and then destined to be torn apart, but that it would be the same in their next lives and perhaps there would come a time when they were allowed to remain together.

Allie realizes that part of her mood can be attributed to the storm, the fire and the alcohol, but knows also that it feels right to be with Noah. They kiss and the kiss deepens until it's inevitable that they make love. Noah leads her to levels of passion higher than she'd thought possible. Over the course of the evening, they make love again and then spend the night together. That night they sleep together, waking now and then, and Noah tells her that he doesn't know how he's lived without her, and pledges his love to her anew.



Kayaks and Forgotten Dreams, Moving Water, Swans and Storms Analysis

As Allie prepares to leave for Noah's on the first full day in New Bern, she learns that Lon had called the night before while she was having dinner with Noah. She feels immediately guilty and worries about what she might have said to clue him in about her time. Then the manager says that he had seemed worried about her. Allie is disappointed that Lon has intruded into her day. She notes that he seemed to have spent a lot of time courting her but now has little time to be with her. Lon himself has admitted this is true. Allie knows that a lawyer is busy and seems to acknowledge that his dedication to his work has gotten him to a place where he is considered a success, and that she's attracted to this. She seems to enjoy the bottom line - his success - but not the trait that has made him a success. It seems selfish on the surface and Allie herself doesn't seem to see this.

Noah tells Allie that he hadn't been exaggerating about their summer together and can remember every minute. He then tells her that it's because he fell in love with her that summer. Noah says that some poets have described love as "an emotion that we can't control," and he says their love is a perfect example of that. He admits he hadn't planned on falling in love with her and doubts she had planned to fall in love with him. It's interesting that Noah doesn't describe falling out of love and doesn't say that he now feels any different about her. Allie simply stares at him and Noah seems to take that as a sign that he's said something wrong, and he apologizes for that, but not for loving her. As he says this, Allie reiterates that he's the only poet she's ever known. This admiration of the artistic talents of the other seems an important bond for them and may actually be what has drawn them together and what will keep them together for many years to come, though neither knows that at this point.

Allie seems to wonder about her life with Lon and the lack of passion, though she's still committing herself to the engagement at this point. She continues to say that passion - such as she feels for Noah - isn't necessary for a relationship. She believes that passion will fade, meaning that it's more important that she and her mate be friends. She feels certain - or at least continues to tell herself that she's certain - that Lon meets those needs and that it's enough. Allie seems to have not yet admitted to herself that she wants more and that Noah is the man who can provide what she seeks so desperately. She does admit to feeling a calm since arriving and that she's glad she came.



Courtrooms; An Unexpected Visitor; Crossroads; A Letter from Yesterday

Courtrooms; An Unexpected Visitor; Crossroads; A Letter from Yesterday Summary

Lon appears in front of a judge along with the other attorney involved in the case he's currently trying. The judge says that Lon's request - to postpone the remainder of the trial until Monday - is a strange request. He also says he doesn't like it and asks Lon again whether it has anything to do with the case. When Lon again assures him that it doesn't, that it's a purely personal nature, and the other attorney again says he doesn't mind the delay, the judge says that because Lon has never made such a request before and because Lon says that the matter really can't wait, he'll grant the delay. Minutes later, Lon is getting into his car and headed toward New Bern.

Noah and Allie spend the morning together. He makes breakfast while she continues to sleep. Then she wakes and they eat together. They look around the house and discover no major damage from the previous day's storm. They hold hands and sometimes Noah stops and simply stares at her. Allie knows he's waiting for her to say something but doesn't know what to say so just kisses him instead. In the middle of their morning, there's a knock at the front door and Noah goes to answer it. He finds Allie's mother there and when he tells Allie, he hears something break. Allie comes into the room and her mother tells Allie that Lon has called her, questioning her about Allie, Noah and Allie's trip, and that he's on his way to New Bern now. Allie's mother, Anne, says that Allie was easy for her to find and that Lon will also find her. Allie realizes it's true. Anne tells Noah that she'd always liked him but felt he wasn't right for Allie, but Noah says he can't understand that. When Anne hands Allie the letters, she tells Allie that they are unopened and that she probably should have given them to her. Allie asks her mother for advice, but she declines, saying that she loves Allie and will support her in whatever decision she makes, but it has to be Allie's decision. Anne leaves and Allie sits alone for awhile, eventually joining Noah on the porch where he's waited.

Allie soon makes it apparent that she's going to return to Lon, even when Noah tells her that she can't live her life for other people and asks if she can simply walk away. Though she says that she "probably" cannot walk away, she seems prepared to do just that. Noah reminds her that they are adults, that they have the right to be happy, and that their love is too beautiful to give up. He tells her that if she walks away again, they'll never have another chance to be together. When she presents him with the drawing she'd done the previous morning in her hotel room - a dual image of Noah as a teenager and Noah as a man - he thanks her and points to the proof that she is an artist. Noah walks Allie to her car, and they kiss several times as she gets in, then he watches her drive away. He wants to scream out to her to stop, but doesn't. He says that she drives away, just as her mother had done, without looking back.



Allie is slightly more in control when she arrives at the hotel where she sees Lon's car parked in the first spot. Her appearance makes it obvious that she's been crying, and she knows she can't do anything about it. She looks first at the newspaper article that brought her to New Bern, then at the pile of letters from Noah that her mother had given her. She picks up the first and is about to open it when she changes her mind and picks up the last. She knows that this will be his "good-bye." She reads it carefully, then reads it again. It is an acknowledgment that their love is over and his thought that it couldn't have ended any other way. He says that if they should happen to see each other, though they'll both have embarked on new lives apart from one another, he knows that he will look at her with joy and will remember their time together. He says that he hopes she will do so as well. He also thanks her for teaching him the value of love. Allie almost reaches for another letter, but knows that she must go talk to Lon, so puts the letters aside and goes into the foyer where Lon is waiting. It's not until she sees him that she realizes what she must say.

Courtrooms; An Unexpected Visitor; Crossroads; A Letter from Yesterday Analysis

After Anne leaves, Allie tells Noah she's sorry. She says that she hadn't expected this to happen. Noah responds that it was bound to happen in some form. He seems to realize that Allie has to eventually make a decision even though Allie herself apparently hasn't thought things out yet. When Noah asks if he can help, Allie says she hasn't yet worked out what she's going to say to Lon. At this point, it seems she might be planning to tell him that she's in love with Noah. But then she seems to face the reality of the situation - that she's made a pledge to Lon and her family and friends know her wedding is just weeks away - and comes to believe that she can't break it off after all. Her reasoning doesn't go deeper yet, only that she doesn't want to hurt anyone and seems to somehow believe that hurting Noah is the better of the choices she has. Anne seems now to realize the depth of the love between Noah and Allie and hints that she might have been wrong to keep them apart, though she adheres to her belief that Noah is not the best man for Allie.

As Allie leaves Noah, he says he knows they will never be together if she takes this step. The situation is interesting because Allie admits she loves both men - even to her mother. She says that Noah inspires a passion in her that's not present in her relationship with Lon, but that she also cares for Lon, though in a different way. When Allie says that Lon has never evoked that same passion as Noah, her mother says that he probably never will. As Anne leaves, she says something that Allie doesn't quite hear, but almost believes it sounded like an instruction that Allie is to "follow your heart." Allie doesn't seem to dwell on it and Anne doesn't elaborate, but it seems possible that it's Anne's way of giving her daughter advice that she is to do what makes her happy without worrying about what will make everyone else happy.

Winter for Two

Winter for Two Summary

The next chapter begins with, "The story ends there, so I close the notebook." The reader, Noah, is now back in the present. He says that his eyes are tired, but have yet to fail him. He is also cold even though he sat in the morning sun to read, but those who care for him know him well and try to make him comfortable. Toward that end, there's hot tea waiting for him and he pours, though it's a tremendous effort. He says that he and Allie are no longer allowed to sleep together, and that he understands the doctor's orders, but that he still slips in sometimes to watch her sleep. The first forty-five years of their married lives, they slept together, and he admits that he doesn't sleep well without her.

Noah says that he visits others in the nursing home in the evenings, entering rooms very much like his own with televisions blaring because most have trouble hearing. They always ask about his wife and he sometimes tells about their life together - their quiet times or the art galleries and rave reviews. Sometimes he says that she's the same and this reminder of mortality frightens them all. Noah often reads and says Allie would have gone with him, had she been able, because she loved poetry.

Having finished reading the notebook to Allie, Noah takes a seat by her bed, holds her hand and waits. He knows that he cannot speak first and admits that he sometimes waits in vain because she never speaks. On this particular day, she turns to him, crying, and says it was a beautiful story, and Noah knows that it's going to be a "magical day." Allie asks if the story is true, if she's heard it before, then asks which of the men she chose to marry. Noah answers only that it was the one who was right for her, and she begins to search for the next question she wants to ask. She tells him that she doesn't want to hurt his feelings because he's been very nice to her, but then asks, "Who are you?"

Noah and Allie live at Creekside Extended Care Facility, and have for about three years. They couldn't stand the thought of selling their house, so boarded it up and moved. Noah says it was the right decision because he is as ill as she, just in different ways. He is fighting cancer for the third time, this time in the prostate, has painful arthritis, heart and kidney problems. He says that he knows a man can live to be 120, but that he wouldn't want to. He says the doctors worry but he hasn't the time to waste on worry. Noah and Allie have five children, four living, and the family visits often.

Returning to the current situation with Allie, Noah tells her that his name is "Duke," and that he's here for her. Then Allie tells him that she cannot remember her own name and begs for his help. He says that he lies to her about both their names, but that there's a reason for the lies. To Allie, he says she is Hannah, that she's a "lover of life" and "creator of happiness." He tells her that she need look only inside herself for the answer to all her needs. He then recites from Walt Whitman and she asks if Noah wrote the



poetry. Noah then waits and finally she asks if he'll stay with her for awhile. He asks if she'd like to go for a walk, says the "goslings" are waiting and that it's a "beautiful day," which makes her blush.

As they walk, Noah thinks of their life together. She'd been a famous painter and he was proud of that. She'd loved to travel, and they'd hoped to do more of it once they retired. Then he'd seen signs of Alzheimer's, though he'd dismissed it until the day she was three blocks from home, lost and frightened. Dr. Barnwell is the physician who gives them the news, and Noah admits that he doesn't remember driving home from the doctor's visit. He says that Allie took over, organizing everything in her life as she'd always done. She'd rewritten her will and written specific burial instructions, which are now in the bottom drawer of Noah's desk. She next wrote letters to everyone - children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews and friends, and then she'd written a letter to Noah. He says that he kept the letter and still reads it sometimes. Noah also has the stack of letters he'd written Allie, those letters her mother had kept from her. He says Allie made him promise to keep them, and he had. She said then that he would know what to do with them and he says she was right - he reads bits and pieces sometimes just as she used to do. There are other letters that he wrote over the years, including the one right after their son died in which Noah pledges to always share her grief, and that they will make it through whatever life hands them, always together.

Noah says that he remembers the day when all four of their surviving children were at the house, Jane, Kate, Jeff and David. Noah tells them the story of his love for Allie, including the day she'd gone to the hotel to meet Lon. That day Lon had spent an hour with her outside the old Methodist Church, trying to change her mind when Allie said her love for Noah was too strong to ignore. She'd told Lon that it wouldn't be fair to Lon and when he'd finally realized she was firm, he'd been a true gentleman. Noah recounted the story as Allie had told it to him, and says he'd expected questions from the children. Instead, they'd recounted all the things they'd learned from their parents. Noah says he realized at that moment that he and Allie had done a good job raising the four.

On this particular day, after Allie has questioned him about his identity and then her own, they sit by a pond and watch the geese. He says that it's good to sit with her and they begin to reconnect, though she is wary. He is, after all, a stranger. Noah tells her that they've known each other for years. She asks if he's been married and he says he has, then she asks about his wife and he tells the truth, telling her that his wife made him who he is. When Allie asks if his wife is dead, Noah questions himself about definition of death, but to her he says simply that his wife lives in his heart. When Allie asks why he's there, he says it is where he's supposed to be and his time isn't wasted. She then says that he's managed to avoid answering most of her questions and he responds that it's because he's heard that women love mysterious strangers. He then turns the tables and asks her if it's true. They tease each other a little and when he places his hand on her knee, she doesn't object.

Noah has come to realize how to have a good day with Allie. He says that there was a time when he spent the day trying to make her remember their lives together. He says on those days he became an "encyclopedia," giving her any number of details about the



people and events of her life. She'd become upset because she had children she couldn't remember and had lived a life she couldn't remember. By the end of the day, she'd be worn out - physically and emotionally - as would he. Gradually, he learned that there was nothing to be gained from making her remember her life. Instead, he came to a point where he focuses on the present. He says that even a child knows that life is a series of little events. Now a good day for Noah, and for Allie, is a day in which they can share some time and maybe even fall just a little bit in love all over again.

At the end of this particular day, they are walking together and Allie is holding Noah's arm. He says it's not certain whether it's because she wants him to be her escort or is afraid she might fall, but it makes him happy either way. After awhile, she tells him she thinks she has an admirer, and she thinks it's Noah. Allie then says that the reason she thinks it to be true is that she found poetry under her pillow and in the pocket of her coat. She has him face her and he does, though he is tired. She says that she wants to remember this moment and he waits with her, savoring the moments.

Noah says that there are three other Alzheimer patients in the facility and that what he knows about these three are the only information he has regarding what to expect. He says that they are in more advanced stages than Allie, often hallucinate, wake confused and are unable to feed themselves. Allie sees something Noah equates with gnomes and says she shouts at them to leave her alone. In this way, Allie is typical of the Alzheimer patients in the facility. But then she has the days of wonderful connection, days when she recognizes Noah as a friend, maybe even a lover and maybe even remembers his name and dreads the moment when her memory will again be gone. Noah says the doctors can't believe it happens as it happens. Specialists come to study Allie and sometimes suggest that it's not really Alzheimer's, but Noah knows it is.

On this particular day, Noah and Allie arrive back at her room. The staff have recognized the signs of a "good day" and have laid a table with dinner for the two of them. There are candles, but the carafe has apple juice and the cutlery is plastic - rules for Allie. Allie continues to talk a little and though he doesn't want to, Noah eats in an effort to get Allie to eat, and she does eat a little. While they are at the table, Allie says she knows how the story ends - that the Allie of that story chooses Noah. After a while, Noah tells her that he loves her, deeply and forever. After a while longer, Allie calls him by name. She tells him that she's afraid.

Noah sees the signs, fights it and hates the realization, but knows Allie is slipping away. He wants to hold onto her but knows he can't. When she begins to cry, saying that "they" are looking at her. Noah knows that in her world, the gnomes are back and there's nothing he can do to change it. He tells her there are no little people, but she is soon crying. Then she looks at him and asks who he is. When she begins to scream, he calls for the nurses, and when they arrive, there are two to comfort.

That night, Noah forgoes visits with other residents and later hears Dr. Barnwell in the hall. Noah says that the doctor works much too hard and has too little time for his family. Dr. Barnwell stops in at Noah's room later, says that he'd heard Noah and Allie had a good day together. He says again that their time is incredible. Then Barnwell asks



what's wrong and Noah says he feels very alone. Barnwell says that no one is alone and Noah thinks of Barnwell's family.

The days pass uneventfully, and Allie fails to recognize Noah at all. He spends his mornings reading to her and his evenings wandering the halls. His nights are sleepless and his mornings cold, and he says that there's comfort in predictability. One morning he sits in his chair, watching the water outside his window. Then he loses his sight, has a tingling that changes to numbness and knows he's having a stroke. Over the coming days, he's in intensive care for several days and the doctors worry he's going to die.

After two weeks, he's able to leave the hospital but his arthritic hands make it impossible to use either a walker or wheelchair, meaning he has an awkward shuffling walk that gets him where he wants to go. On a particular night, he reads again the letter Allie left him after she'd been diagnosed with Alzheimer's but before she'd gotten bad. In that letter she pledges her love to him forever, and vows that even when she can't remember who he is, she'll remember their love. She begs him not to be angry with her when the time comes that she can't remember him.

On this night, he wants to be with Allie. It's their anniversary - forty-nine years since they married. He knows he's not allowed to visit her in the middle of the night and knows that he can't sneak past the night nurse in his current condition. A nurse named Janice is on duty. She is known for sticking to the rules and reminds Noah that he's not supposed to see Allie after bedtime. Janice tells Noah that he's an inspiration to everyone, and that his love for his wife is legendary. She tells him that despite that, rules are rules and that he must return to his room. She then says that she is going to leave her post long enough to go for coffee. As she leaves, Noah notes that she has a cup of still hot coffee on the desk and is thankful for the opportunity. Noah then goes on to Allie's room.

He sits quietly for a time, then can't resist touching her. He wakes her and is immediately sorry because he knows that she'll scream out her fears. But she doesn't. Instead, this time, she reaches for him, calls him by name and begins to unbutton his shirt.

Winter for Two Analysis

Noah says he knows that the question about his identity is bound to come and that he simply waits for it to arrive. She says that she doesn't want to hurt his feelings, and he says that the words will "tear a piece from my heart and leave a scar," though he's heard the words many times before. Noah's anguish is unbelievable, but he puts himself through the daily pain of reliving their lives through the reading of the notebook. He doesn't say exactly how often she has a "good day" in which she eventually comes to remember - or at least believe his story. Noah's love is apparently so deep he's willing to put himself through whatever is necessary in order to have a brief time with her.

Noah wonders if Allie dreams about them, or if she dreams at all, and says that this is one of the many things about his wife that he doesn't understand. It seems this is likely



a very difficult part of the disease for Noah - that she is removed from him and that he can't be as big a part of her life as he once was. It's a seemingly impossible situation because Noah is both excluded from Allie's thoughts and life and Allie isn't part of his own.

Noah says that he sees dusk one day and realizes that it's not quite daylight but not quite nighttime. He says that day and night are together but not together. He says that he wondered at the time how that would feel, to be with Allie but to be separated. He says that he now knows how it feels. It's an interesting analogy but seems accurate in that he - like the day - sees Allie just out of his reach and she - like the night - can almost reach back and touch him but they can never quite meet.

At one point on the particularly good afternoon, Allie says that she hopes she has always enjoyed their time together as she does on this day. She seems to have a sense of having shared something more than he's telling her, but doesn't know any details.

For Noah's part, he says that he is now so stooped that they are eye level when they are standing facing each other. Noah says he is sometimes glad she can't know how much he has changed. It's interesting that Noah loves Allie still, though she's changed so dramatically, but that he doesn't want her to see him so changed. It could also be that he's searching for any positive point he can find in the current situation.

Noah says that there are specialists that study Allie, searching for ways to explain what happens to Allie. Noah says the problem is that they use only their science to try to explain the issue and that they'll never arrive at a satisfactory conclusion using that method.

Noah returns to his room after his good time with Allie, leaving his door partly open and hating the fact that he's envious of their conversations. It seems evident that Noah longs for that for himself and Allie.



Characters

Noah Taylor Calhoun

Noah is, according to Allie, a poet. In fact, it was his father who instilled in him a love of poetry, though the instruction was done in an effort to get Noah past a detrimental stuttering problem. That love of poetry stays with him throughout his life and even when Allie is devastated with Alzheimer's, Noah writes poetry for her and leaves poems for her. Noah is a kind man, sensitive and loyal. It's those attributes that prompt him to wait more than a decade for Allie's return, though he had no way of knowing that she would actually return at all. He admits to an affair and some dates, but says near the end of the story that if it hadn't been for Allie, he would never have married.

Allie notes that Noah is the person who would take time out of his life to renovate a historic home, a project few would have taken on. She also notes that he's the kind of person to spend a morning on the water simply to watch the sunrise and an hour on the porch, simply enjoying nature or the company of a friend. It seems that it's these qualities that make him the kind of person who can patiently sit with Allie over the course of many hours without demanding anything more than that she be able to accept his company. He admits that it tears his heart out that she doesn't recognize him, but feels wonderful that she is willing to be with him. He calls those days "miracles," and works hard to make them happen.

Allie Nelson Calhoun

Allie is a young girl who is easily swayed by her parents and their decision that Noah isn't the best choice for her life partner. After she and Noah part at the end of the summer, her mother withholds Noah's letters, and it's only later that Allie's mother recognizes the love for what it is - deep, abiding and true. When Allie is faced with the decision to marry Lon as planned or to disappoint everyone in order to marry Noah, she knows that the easiest route in terms of the number of people impacted would be to simply go through with the marriage to Lon. She also knows that it wouldn't be fair to Lon and it seems that this point plays a role in her eventual decision.

When Allie learns she has Alzheimer's, she immediately begins apologizing to Noah as if there's something she could have done about it. Then she begins to plan and organize, arranging for them to have a place to live, that her will and burial plans are fully in order, and she writes letters to everyone. In the letter she writes to Noah, she tells him that even on the days she can't recognize him, that he is to remember that she loves him, fully and forever.



Lon Hammond Jr.

The man Allie was to marry. Lon is a successful attorney, eight years older than Allie; the two met during the war. Allie notes that Lon is successful and confident. Allie is working in a hospital as a volunteer and seems to recognize Lon as someone who helps her get past the horror of what she sees at the hospital. Lon is among the more influential families of the state who made their fortunes in cotton.

Morris Goldman

The man who owns the scrap yard where Noah works before entering the military. Goldman laughingly tells Noah that his only fault is that he isn't Jewish. When he dies and the scrap yard is sold, Noah inherits seventy-thousand dollars in keeping with Goldman's promise.

Anne Nelson

Anne is Allie's mother. Anne shows up on the morning after Allie stays with Noah and warns Allie that Lon is on his way. It's Anne who kept Noah's letters from Allie saying that it was only because she felt Noah wasn't the best choice for Allie. She also says that she likes Noah, a point that Noah can't understand.

Noah's Father

Noah's father seems to have loved and been very proud of Noah. When Noah, as a child, is thought to be retarded and has trouble speaking because of a stutter, it's Noah's father who teaches him to love poetry. They spend much time together, and after Noah's trouble with school work and his stuttering are no longer an issue, Noah continues to spend time with his father. Noah's father dies soon after Noah buys the historic house as a restoration project.

Dr. Barnwell

The physician who tells Allie and Noah that Allie is in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease. Noah says that Dr. Barnwell is younger than his own youngest child and that he's a kind, compassionate man. Dr. Barnwell is obviously upset at having to share the news, saying that he's sorry. He prepares them as best he can for what to expect. Dr. Barnwell is also the physician who cares for both Allie and Noah as they live in the nursing facility and is amazed by the fact that Noah can sometimes reach Allie.



Noah and Allie's Unnamed Son

A child who died at four years of age. Noah doesn't relate the child's name but says he looked like Allie. The cause of death is also not discussed. Noah says that no parent should outlive a child and that this was the hardest time he and Allie faced in their lives. Noah says that he would gladly trade his life for that of his son.

Janice

Janice is a nurse who is on duty the night after Noah returns to the nursing facility. She has been a nurse for five years and isn't one to bend the rules. When Noah is desperate to see Allie, Janice confides that his love for his wife is an inspiration to her. She then says that despite that, rules are rules and Noah must return to his own room rather than going to Allie's. She then makes a point of saying that she's going to get coffee, though she has a fresh cup on her desk, allowing Noah to go on to Allie's room anyway.

Gus

Gus is an old, black man whom Noah meets after buying the historic home for renovating. Gus befriends Noah soon after Noah's arrival. Gus shows up the first time with stew and liquor and the two forge a fast friendship. Gus plays harmonica and the two often spend an evening together on Noah's front porch. Noah says that at least part of it is that Gus wants to escape his own crowded home.



Objects/Places

Brices Creek

The creek beside the historic home Noah is restoring in 1946.

Raleigh

Where Allie lives with her parents in the years after meeting Noah.

Winston-Salem

Where Allie lives with her parents when she and Noah meet.

New Bern

Where Noah lives and where he meets Allie.

Goldman's Scrap Yard

Where Noah works to help build a business that eventually results in the inheritance he uses to buy the house.

Clem

The hound dog that Noah has and that Allie is taken with when she arrives at his house.

The Lake at Brices Creek

A small lake formed by the creek where Noah and Allie go to see the swans and geese.

Creekside Extended Care Facility

Where Noah and Allie live after their health begins to fail.

The Old Methodist Church

Where Allie and Lon go to talk when he comes to New Bern looking for her.

The Front Porch

The place on Noah's house where he spends a lot of time and where he and Allie sit together after the first meal of their reunion.



Themes

Love Conquers All

The love between Noah and Allie transcends ages and even an incurable disease that medical care professionals are unable to explain. This love survives decades of separation and an attempt by Allie's mother to keep them apart. Allie and Noah meet as teenagers and Allie's mother naturally believes the two have a "puppy love" relationship, and she dismisses its importance. She explains that as the reason she kept Noah's letters from Allie, saying that she had never really expected that it would matter and that the love would fade in time. This doesn't happen as evidenced by Allie's decision to visit Noah just weeks before her wedding. While she'd been able to consent to marrying Lon, she seems unable to go through with the wedding until she'd seen Noah to determine what it was that they'd shared and why it left such a lasting impact.

What's more amazing than the fact that Noah and Allie reconnect after decades apart is that Noah is able to connect with Allie even after she is debilitated from the effects of Alzheimer's. Their love becomes a lifeline for the two of them. On the days Allie is able to fight her way through the disease to become interested in her surroundings, she quickly falls in love with Noah all over again. For Noah's part, he'd written Allie a letter shortly before they were to part as teenagers. In that letter, he tells her that they are destined to meet and fall in love and that their souls will meet again in each life they live.

Maturity in the Face of Disaster

The more important coming of age theme in this book is exemplified in the fact that he comes to accept Allie's limitations and the occasional miracle days they are able to spend together because of his patience. Noah loves Allie so completely that it seems natural that he would want her to recognize him and return that love. When she doesn't, he admits that it tears his heart out. For a while, he insists on trying to make her remember and spends a great deal of time trying to spark memories. He comes to realize that on those days, he's little more than an "encyclopedia," and that he spends the day answering her questions. By the time that she fully realizes that she has an entire life - children, grandchildren and a successful career that she can't remember - she's exhausted and inconsolable. Noah eventually comes to realize that it's better to simply accept Allie as she is and to find a better way to spend her good days.

It's this quest that makes him willing to spend an entire day reading to Allie and waiting for her to find her way through the darkness that is now her life in order to respond to Noah. He admits that the reading tires him considerably and that it's an effort just to pour himself a cup of tea at the end of the story. He then sits patiently - a trait he says young people never master - and waits for Allie rather than forcing his way into her thoughts. The patience occasionally pays off, though Noah admits that it's not as often as it once was, but it's more often than the medical professionals expect.



The Need for Encouragement

Noah tells Allie that she is an artist. Though Allie has always recognized her talent, she'd never believed it to be significant and something she should - and could - pursue. Her parents aren't supportive in this venture, saying that art isn't a suitable career. What's interesting is that Lon also isn't encouraging. It could be that he doesn't recognize the degree of talent or that he simply doesn't appreciate art. What is significant is that under Noah's encouragement, Allie's talent is sufficient to launch her into a successful career. Her art hangs in galleries and private collections around the world. Allie herself vows to return to her art only after reuniting with Noah. An interesting point is that Allie never finds her inspiration after her illness becomes serious. Even on those days when she and Noah manage to reconnect, she is unable to find inspiration, even when she's given a paintbrush.

Another interesting point is that Lon admits to needing her encouragement, even while being unable - or unwilling - to offer the same to Allie. He says she knows exactly what to say to him at the end of a day and that he looks forward to that. This one-sided encouragement seems to be one of the problems Allie has with her love for Lon.



Style

Point of View

The story is presented in a limited view. The reader sees the majority of the story from Noah's point of view, though there are sections that are presented from Allie's perspective when she learns of Noah's house purchase and when she returns to the inn to see Lon. The limited perspective may seem a problem for some readers because specific points are not revealed. For example, Noah tells the story of him and Allie and their reunion but doesn't tell what Allie does when she returns to the hotel to meet Lon. It's later that Noah reveals what Allie decided. Some points are presented through letters with the story divided between exposition and dialog. Both are reasonable and effective.

Setting

The book is set in North Carolina beginning in the 1930s prior to World War II. There are several distinct places in the story. The larger is New Bern where Noah grew up. The town is not described in great detail, but what is included seems reasonable and believable. The smaller settings include Noah's restored home, a small lake on Brices Creek and Creekside Extended Care Facility. All three play a major role in the telling of the story.

Noah's house is a historic home with significance to his life with Allie because they'd seen the home together when they were teenagers and because Noah had always pledged to own and restore the house. The house is described only to a small degree. Details included that the house had a fireplace, hardwood flooring and a comfortable front porch. All are believable. Additional details are not necessary to the story.

The final setting is Creekside and in this setting, Noah offers the details that are pertinent to the telling of the story. For example, there's the fact that his room has a view of the nearby water and that he and Allie have the opportunity to take a walk to see the swans on those occasions when Allie has a good day. Overall, the settings - though not necessarily real - are believable and add to the believability of the story.

Language and Meaning

The story is written in a straight-forward, easy to understand style. There are few words that won't be understood by a reader with a basic vocabulary and those few are readily grasped through the context. The one point that may give readers trouble is not in the words used but in the presentation of the story.

The story is sentimental and contains several pieces of poetry along with excerpts of letters exchanged between Noah and Allie. That sentimentality is effective for the



presentation of this story. For example, the nurses are all intrigued by the love affair that continues and grows each time Allie has a good day. They seek to help in whatever ways they can, providing Allie and Noah a candlelit dinner after a particularly good day together.

Structure

The story is divided into chapters that range from only two pages to more than fifty. The chapters are not numbered but are named. The names of the chapters offer a clue as to the contents of that particular chapter. Chapter names are Miracles, Ghosts, Reunion, Phone Calls, Kayaks and Forgotten Dreams, Moving Water, Swans Storms, Courtrooms, Unexpected Visitor, Crossroads, A Letter from Yesterday, and Winter for Two. The chapter titled Courtrooms is only two pages long and details Lon's decision to delay a trial he's involved with in order to go find Allie. Winter for Two is the longest of the chapters and details Noah and Allie's life together, including Allie's diagnosis with Alzheimer's and Noah's learning to deal with the situation. The reader likely expects the chapter titled Unexpected Visitor to be about Lon, but it's actually about Anne, Allie's mother.

The timeline is somewhat convoluted and some readers may become confused before reaching an explanation. The book begins with Noah preparing to read to a woman and the next section is the story itself, referred to by Noah as "the notebook." The story then reverts back to the couple and it's only then revealed that they and their love are the subject of the notebook. This seems rather convoluted but is in fact a very effective method of presentation.



Quotes

"There is sickness rolling through my body; I'm neither strong nor healthy, and my days are spent like an old party balloon: listless, spongy and growing softer over time."

Miracles, Page 2

"Without another word they came together, as if it were the most natural thing in the world, and he put his arms around her, drawing her close." Reunion, Page 38

"It wasn't Noah she loved; she loved what they had once been. Besides, it was normal to feel that way. Her first real love, the only man she'd ever been with - how could she expect to forget him?" Reunion, Page 62

"She wanted something else, something different, something more. Passion and romance, perhaps, or maybe quiet conversations in candlelit rooms, or perhaps something as simple as not being second." Reunion, Page 74

"When the lump in his throat subsided, he whispered to her, 'You are the answer to every prayer I've offered. You are a song, a dream, a whisper, and I don't know how I could have lived without you for as long as I have. I love you, Allie, more than you can ever imagine. I always have, and I always will.'" Swans and Storms, Page 127

"I have read to her this morning, as I do every morning, because it is something I must do. Not for duty - although I suppose a case could be made for this - but for another, more romantic reason. I wish I could explain it more fully right now, but it's still early, and talking about romance isn't really possible before lunch anymore, at least not for me." Winter for Two, Page 154

"Poetry brings great beauty to life, but also great sadness, and I'm not sure it's a fair exchange for someone my age. A man should enjoy other things if he can; he should spend his final days in the sun. Mine will be spent by a reading lamp." Winter for Two, Page 157

"It is a barren disease, as empty and lifeless as a desert. It is a thief of hearts and souls and memories." Winter for Two, Page 167

"You are every reason, every hope, and every dream I've ever had, and no matter what happens to us in the future, every day we are together is the greatest day of my life. I



will always be yours. And, my darling, you will always be mine." Winter for Two, Page 175

"And when the nurses come in they see two people they must comfort. A woman shaking in fear from the demons in her mind and the old man who loves her more deeply than life itself, crying softly in the corner, his face in his hands." Winter for Two, Page 193

"My works hang in museums and private collections now, and though there have been times when I was frazzled and distracted because of shows and critics, you were always there with kind words, encouraging me." Winter for Two, Page 205

"I kiss her lips, her cheeks, and listen as she takes a breath. She murmurs softly, 'Oh Noah ... I've missed you.' Another miracle - the greatest of all! - and there's no way I can stop the tears as we begin to slip toward heaven itself." Winter for Two, Page 213

Topics for Discussion

What is the "notebook" as read by Noah? Who is the author? What is its significance?

Why does Allie call Noah a poet? What is it in his past that created this appreciation for the written word? How does that impact his entire life with Allie?

Why does Allie come to see Noah just weeks before her planned wedding to Lon? What does her mother make of this reunion?

Who is Dr. Barnwell? What is his role in the lives of Noah and Allie?

What is it that the doctors and specialists think of Allie's occasional "good days?" What does Noah say about it? What do the nurses say about it? Why does Noah call it a "miracle?"

How many children do Noah and Allie have? What is it that Noah says draws them closer than any other thing could have?

What is the role of swans and geese in the lives of Noah and Allie?

Describe Creekside. How do Allie and Noah come to live there? What does Noah think of the facility? Why?